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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

PRESS BRIEFING
BY
LARRY SPEAKES

May 24, 1984

The Briefing Room

1:04 P.M. EDT

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#1107-05/24

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1:04 P.M. EDT

MR. SPEAKES: The President at 1:30 p.m. today -- and I'm not sure we've had this on the schedule yet -- meets with Jay Hair who's Executive Vice President of the National Wildlife Federation. Bill Ruckelshaus and Secretary Clark are joining him for the meeting.

At 2:00 p.m., Cabinet Council on Management and Administration, discussing -- getting a report on the cost control measure of the Commission on Cost Control. What's it called?

MR. FITZWATER: Grace Commission.

MR. SPEAKES: Grace Commission. Yes. Stockman and Fuller are giving the report.

At 4:30 p.m., he meets with the Multiple Sclerosis Society's Mother and Father of the Year in the Oval Office.

And tonight, he's going out for a private dinner. The private dinner's at the home of Clare Booth Luce -- 7:35 p.m. Travel pool should get on their horse at 7:15 p.m. in here. He'll be back at 10:00 p.m.

Q Is there any particular subject or reason that the 1:30 p.m. meeting --

MR. SPEAKES: -- Luce.

Q No.

Q Does she live in Hawaii? (Laughter.)

Q Jane lives in --

Q Yes, she does live in Hawaii. (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: -- she came home. .

Q Some travel pool.

MR. SPEAKES: The meeting with Jay Hair is an opportunity to exchange views on environmental subjects.

Secretary Clark, as you know, when he assumed his position over there met with a number of environmental groups who had objections to previous policy and statements.

Q -- that's what I was asking. Has Hair asked to come into speak on something in particular?

MR. SPEAKES: No. I don't think it's anything particular. Just general.

Q Are you open for questions?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

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Tomorrow, at 10:00 a.m. in Room 450, we'll have Undersecretary of the Treasury, Beryl Sprinkel, who will speak on the Treasury issues that will take -- that we will have at the economic summit: War recovery, finance, monetary policy and debt.

Today, at 2:15 p.m. on the South Lawn, Mrs. Reagan is holding a reception for the 10th Very Special Arts Festival being held in Washington this week by the National Committee for Arts with the Handicapped. This is a coordinating agency for creating and promoting arts programs for individuals with disabilities. Mrs. Reagan is Honorary Chairman. It operates in all 50 states, the District and Puerto Rico. And Tony Randall will be Master of Ceremonies for an entertainment program. And a number of people present there include: George Segal's Banjo Band, Burl Ives and the United Street Force featuring Eddie Fernandez.

Q Is Burl Ives --

Q -- break dancing?

MR. SPEAKES: Yesterday -- Yes, there will be some break dancing there.

Q -- open coverage?

MR. SPEAKES: Open coverage.

The President, as we announced yesterday, will attend the ceremony for the Vietnam Unknown Soldier at the Capitol. Open coverage to the extent there's room in the Rotunda. The travel pool will be taken to the crypt where they'll be able to watch the ceremony on closed circuit television. The President's remarks will be piped back in the Briefing Room at 3:00 p.m., and, as you know, he's going out Monday to the cemetery.

On Tuesday, the 29th, the President will fly to Colorado Springs in the afternoon. After his arrival, he will tour the U.S. Olympic Training Facilities/Sports Medicine Center and visit with U.S. Olympic athletes, see a demonstration by the U.S. Weightlifting Team and the Girls Basketball Team. The President will make remarks at 3:00 p.m. Mountain Daylight, 5:00 p.m. Eastern at the Olympic Training Center. Expanded pool coverage there.

The President will have brief remarks to a Reagan-Bush Volunteers Group at about 5:00 p.m. at the Broadmoor. There is no press coverage of the political meeting.

And on Wednesday, the President will attend the commencement exercises at the United States Air Force Academy -- 9:15 a.m. in the morning Mountain Time. The President will speak at 9:35 a.m. He leaves Colorado at 12:35 p.m. Mountain Daylight, returning to Andrews at 5:35 p.m., back at the White House at 6:00 p.m.

And, as you know, he has a dinner with the NATO Foreign Ministers that night.

Press hotel in Colorado is the Antlers. Press check-in is

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Tuesday at 10:45 a.m. We'll have fact sheets and a schedule on Monday.

The trip will be paid for by the Reagan-Bush Campaign Committee, since it is a Reagan-Bush Campaign event.

Q Is there coverage of the evening event when he comes back? The NATO --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, there is. I would guess toasts --

Q Writing pool and photo coverage?

MR. SPEAKES: Writing pool and photo coverage on Tuesday night.

Q Can you tell us the subject --

Q Black tie?

MR. SPEAKES: I guess so.

I'm open for questions.

Q All right. Could I ask two?

First, in reference to this trip, do you know the subject of the commencement address?

MR. SPEAKES: Have you seen the commencement address yet? I have not. I would judge, and I know for a fact, it's going to be on U.S. position in the world, foreign policy, the strong economy, strong defense. That type.

Q He didn't miss anything there, did he?

Q My main question is --

Q How about Bill Casey?

Q -- has the President read the Albosta report? Does he have any comment? Does his appearance at the CIA mean he fully endorses Casey's role as Director and mean that he will continue in his job?

MR. SPEAKES: On the whole subject, we've received it yesterday afternoon. It is being read by the Counsel's Office. I don't know whether they will want to have anything to say afterwards, after they complete reading it. The President has not read it. The President will be briefed on it by Fred Fielding after they've completed studying it.

The matter, as far as the President is concerned, still rests with the Justice Department, the entire briefing book matter. A certain amount of it's on appeal, certain issues are on appeal in the courts and decisions that will be made on that will be made by the Justice Department, without White House interference.

The trip to the CIA was long planned. It's certainly an endorsement of the role of the CIA and the role its Director's playing there. The President has not changed his position on Director Casey.

Q Which is?

MR. SPEAKES: Which is as it was yesterday.

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Q Well, then --

Q What was it?

MR. SPEAKES: I stated it yesterday and said we're not going into all that -- you're not playing those games.

Q Yes, but we can repeat what you said yesterday, right? He has full confidence in Casey.

MR. SPEAKES: You bet.

Q On the question, then, of the independent counsel, that means that the President will not make any expression -- even though O'Neill and others now in the Committee have called for --

MR. SPEAKES: The President has not made any expression on it. The matter, once again, rests with Justice and, as I say, certain issues of it are on appeal in the courts and the courts will ultimately decide.

Mick.

Q Larry, the Director this morning indicated that he had a statement later today. Did he talk to the President about what that statement might be?

MR. SPEAKES: Mick, I don't know. I was with them, I'd say, 90 percent, 95 percent of the time out there and I don't believe it was discussed.

Q Did the Director offer his resignation?

MR. SPEAKES: I didn't see it.

Q Was there any discussion of Albosta --

Q Wait --

Q -- offer it orally, Larry?

MR. SPEAKES: As I say, I was with them about 95 percent of the time and I didn't hear or see any discussion or any --

Q Well, do you know --

MR. SPEAKES: -- thing pass between the two.

Q On anything?

MR. SPEAKES: I think that'd be highly far fetched to --

Q You didn't hear any discussion pass between the two on what? Anything?

MR. SPEAKES:

Q No, no --

Q Larry --

Q No, I mean --

Q Did you hear anything in general about the Albosta report or --

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MR. SPEAKES: No. Just what I said, no.

Q Well, you said no in response to the question, "Did you hear him offer his resignation?"

MR. SPEAKES: The initial part of his question was was anything discussed on the Albosta thing.

Q Do you or does anybody at the White House know what will be in the statement? Or has Casey discussed --

MR. SPEAKES: I don't believe so. I haven't talked to Fred in the last hour; but I don't think we've had any idea of what notification --

Q Is Fred the person that Casey would talk to if he called someone in the White House? Or is there someone else he would deal with?

MR. SPEAKES: Not necessarily. I think -- I don't know who he'd call.

Q He wouldn't call Baker? (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: He might.

Q No, I mean, really --

Q You wouldn't remember.

Q -- you don't know who would call? Maybe --

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know.

Q Do you have any idea --

MR. SPEAKES: Bud, you know, whoever.

Q Do you have any idea what kind of a statement Casey is going to make?

MR. SPEAKES: You tune out except when you're asking questions. I just answered that over here.

Q What was the answer?

MR. SPEAKES: Ben.

Q No.

Q When you talked about highly far fetched, what were you referring to?

MR. SPEAKES: When I said what?

Q You said something was highly far fetched. Was it that they would --

MR. SPEAKES: That he would have passed a resignation to him during the ceremonies while they were digging their dirt up out there. (Laughter.)

Bob.

Q Larry, you said you hadn't seen his resignation. Do you know if he's offered it or will?

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MR. SPEAKES: As I say, I wouldn't -- I'd be about 90 percent certain he hadn't; but I haven't -- I don't think anything's here on it.

Anything else?

Saul.

Q Yes, just playing with words maybe; but --

MR. SPEAKES: Okay.

Q -- it was certainly an endorsement of the role of the CIA and the role of the Director. Was it an endorsement of the Director?

MR. SPEAKES: You'll have to draw your own conclusions there;

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but, certainly the President is pleased with the Director's restoration of the CIA to its proper role and his leadership of the CIA, and all of that.

Q It seems to me that what you're -- what you're saying and what the President said is that he's pleased with the job the Director has done.

MR. SPEAKES: That's it.

Q Now, what I'm asking is whether he's pleased with the Director?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q Does he think his job might be finished?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think so.

Q Larry, did the President offer any support, reaffirmation of that support, to Casey directly in their discussions today?

MR. SPEAKES: As I say -- you mean on the role of the CIA?

Q No, on -- on his support, you know; did he express to Casey this full confidence that he's expressed through you?

MR. SPEAKES: No, it wasn't required -- called for, required -- necessary.

David?

Q Central America. The House --

MR. SPEAKES: Central America okay? Timberg wants to go again.

Q I just wonder if you could tell us -- if, what we can read by this meeting with the President today? I mean, was the President, in fact, trying to say to Casey, and to say to us that -- that he does not consider the Albosta charges against Casey especially serious?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think the President can pass judgment on the Albosta charge, because he hasn't read it or been briefed on it.

Q Well, he must have some -- obviously he knows something about it. And he knows that he's out there in front of the White House press corps.

MR. SPEAKES: This meeting had been long scheduled --

Q So, it should not be read that way?

MR. SPEAKES: You'll have to read it, however you want to read it. I've said what I've said under the President's personal feelings for Director Casey yesterday. I've said what I've said today on his feelings for the CIA and the Director's role in the CIA.

I've said the trip was long scheduled. The President

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went out there. You know, I don't --

Q What about, what about the fact that Baker --

MR. SPEAKES: What did you want him to do?

Q No, I'm just asking what his -- his -- you know, should we -- what I was asking was, should we view this as the President not considering the charges against Casey especially serious? You said he --

MR. SPEAKES: I -- I can't pass judgment on the charges.

Q Okay, I'm asking you a different question, which is what about the fact that Jim Baker wasn't there? I mean, we were reading Sunday in a great american newspaper that Jim Baker travels everywhere with the President.

MR. SPEAKES: No, he doesn't. A lot of times he goes turkey hunting when the President's gone somewhere. (Laughter).

He was at some other event. You don't know where that --

Q -- here again --

MR. ROUSSEL: He had to go to a thing for a friend of his --

MR. SPEAKES: Some ceremony honoring a friend of his. (Laughter.)

MR. ROUSSEL: I guess it was for the guy's wife --

Q -- some other turkey -- (Laughter.) What?

MR. ROUSSEL: -- a memorial service -- for the guy's wife --

MR. SPEAKES: A memorial service for --

Q Larry --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes?

Q Larry, I just can't get it out of my head that somehow we're playing with words. And that what we --

MR. SPEAKES: You are, I'm not.

Q And that -- and that the President had an opportunity today to give a ringing endorsement of his -- of his Central Intelligence Agency Director who was under fire and he did not.

MR. SPEAKES: Boy, if you review those remarks, you know, praising the Casey leadership and the management study out there, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera, I don't know what he --

Q You wouldn't agree with -- you wouldn't agree with -- that's plain with what I just said.

MR. SPEAKES: You're going down -- going down the

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wrong track.

Mick?

Q Larry, the President obviously hasn't an -- had an opportunity to read a twenty-four hundred page report, but he certainly had the opportunity to read --

Q Hmmm --

Q -- the accounts in the various newspapers and television. What has been his reaction, so far, to that?

MR. SPEAKES: Doesn't have any..

Q Larry --

MR. SPEAKES: Timberg.

Q Come on -- no one believes that ---

Q The schedule originally had that the President will only speak for a few minutes, the one the CIA gave out. And he spoke for about ten. I was wondering, were there any changes in the President's remarks -- you know, in the last few hours?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, he continued to edit on his speech up until about 9:00 or 9:30 this morning.

Q Can you tell us what was added or what was deleted?

MR. SPEAKES: Nothing.

Q Well --

MR. SPEAKES: Nothing that you would find significant to the story that you're pursuing.

Q Larry, you say -- that in the time --

Q Hit it.

Q -- that you were there, that they didn't discuss the Albosta Committee. Did they discuss Nicaragua and any covert aid?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think so.

Q Larry, on that subject --

Q Yes, Central America. Go ahead.

Q -- if the House gives you the Salvadoran aid and not the covert aid, does the administration have a strategy to basically try and win it out of the Senate? I mean, is that the next step?

MR. SPEAKES: Our position -- our position on the subject is that we want both. As we've always said, the El Salvador aid of \$61 million and the, and the Nicaraguan aid of \$21 million -- we would not accept any, any legislation that would have a termination clause in it. Whether it be wind-down, or an outright termination. We will, the first vote on the El Salvador aid is

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scheduled, about now, in the House; and the second vote probably about 2:30 p.m. on the Nicaraguan aid. If defeated on the Nicaraguan aid we would, of course, continue to work for its restoration. We feel like we need it.

Q In the Senate vote, I mean, is that part of the --

MR. SPEAKES: In the Senate, yes.

Q What did you mean, termination or wind-down -- on El Salvador, or on the other?

MR. SPEAKES: On the other -- Nicaraguan.

Q You say you will not accept -- are you saying you'd veto?

MR. SPEAKES: I'm not -- never say veto -- but --

Q You said, "will not accept" --

MR. SPEAKES: We will not accept any compromise that would offer that. We would not accept any version of a compromise. I don't think that there's going to be an opportunity to -- any compromise offered there before the vote today. The vote is on a Boland amendment, which essentially zeros out covert.

Mike?

Q Can you be more specific about what you're talking about with regard to the Nicaraguan aid, please?

MR. SPEAKES: There's \$21 million pending for CIA appropriations.

Q Larry, if you get a vote on something where it's zeroed out completely, and there's no termination clause, it's just a total omission, so you get the Salvadoran money clean -- you'd accept that, right? Because that wouldn't include a termination clause --

MR. SPEAKES: That's right. It's a different vote, but we would certainly pursue all avenues to restore the Nicaraguan aid.

Q So the only thing that would cause you to reject it would be the conclusion of this termination?

MR. SPEAKES: That's right, yes.

Q Yes, but there's a story in the paper which says you have already threatened to veto the whole thing if you don't get the Nicaraguan --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, I don't know who threatened the veto. Some people could have said, I bet the President would veto a termination clause -- but he hasn't said --

Q You're saying the opposite --

MR. SPEAKES: What?

Q You're saying the opposite -- you'll take the El Salvadoran aid if you can get it, and then go fight the other thing --

MR. SPEAKES: I think the veto thing that the paper was --

Q -- as a separate thing?

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MR. SPEAKES: --was the termination business.

Mike?

Q Could you tell us why you're more willing to discuss the sum of -- to discuss the \$21 million as CIA appropriations for covert aid now, but have -- neglected to do so in the past?

MR. SPEAKES: No, we've discussed it in those terms. In fact that's the way it appears in the bill. I think it says appropriation for the CIA. It doesn't say "covert" but, we've generally had to talk about this in order to be able to discuss it in some fashion. But, we're not specific. I think everybody understands, without us having to write it out in black and white -- with pictures.

Q Does the President's endorsement of Casey's activities as CIA Director -- does that also include his lobbying efforts and informing of Congress on -- in terms of this aid?

MR. SPEAKES: We've always worked with Congress to try to do so, and I think Director Casey has made his views known on the subject of complaints by Congress that they didn't have sufficient notice on some of the activities of the CIA. And now he's promised to make amends. The President says that's fine.

Q Got something on the Mid East --

Q Yes, Mid East.

MR. SPEAKES: The Mid East -- okay.

Q Do you have anything at all, I know it's early, but do you have anything at all on how the White House intends to approach the Stinger issue, about -- in terms of --

MR. SPEAKES: Stinger issue -- there's been a pending request from the Saudi Arabian government for a number of months on a list of armaments. In fact, we've always had a fairly substantial number of requests for military assistance from Saudi Arabia that are in various stages of discussion. Specifically on the Stingers -- they've had that request pending for a while. This matter is under consideration, as are other military sales to Saudi Arabia. And what we are doing is pursuing the matter with the Congressional leadership. We intend to actively and fully discuss this matter with the leadership on the Hill before we decide to proceed in any fashion with the sale.

The matter has not been decided. No decision has been made as to whether we would proceed with it, pending these Congressional consultations. The matter has not come to the President.

Q Well, as has come up in the past, would you prefer to avoid the route of using Presidential authority to do this?

MR. SPEAKES: There are two options, one for Congressional approval or disapproval -- route of the sale. Or, the other route is the emergency authority. Both are options. We have not decided on either, and really have no preference, pending our discussion of the matter fully with Congress.

Q Isn't there some time constraint on this, considering that, at least, it appears to be related to what's happening in the Gulf?

MR. SPEAKES: There's no specific -- we have not set a timetable because we want this matter thoroughly thrashed out with the Congressional leadership before we make a decision as to whether or not to proceed. But, certainly, there is an urgency to the situation there; and that is probably why this, at least this one item, is at the forefront for the moment.

Q What about the --

Q Is he --

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Q -- the report that the Iranians have hit at least one more, possibly two more, oil freighters?

MR. SPEAKES: We've seen the wire reports, but we don't have an independent confirmation of it.

George?

Q Is the consultation on whether it can get passed in Congress, and that you've already decided you want to do it? Or is it whether you want to do it?

MR. SPEAKES: No. We certainly recognize the needs of the Saudis and the urgency of the situation, but I don't think it is something that we would proceed with without Congressional support.

Q You mainly want to make sure you have the Congressional support before you proceed?

MR. SPEAKES: I think that'd be fair, yes.

Helen?

Q Is the White House also checking out the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee which works actively to defeat any arms sales to the Middle East, Arab countries?

MR. SPEAKES: What do you mean by "checking out"?

Q I mean -- if you're discussing it with them?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know, I would assume that there is certainly -- there would certainly be discussions that would take place with interest groups, Jewish groups, in this country before we do; and also with other governments in the region.

Q Well, they prevailed the last time. Will they prevail this time?

MR. SPEAKES: Don't know.

Q Do you have anything on the ruling on El Salvador on the church woman --

MR. SPEAKES: The State Department had a fairly extensive statement on the church women.

Timberg.

Q Who on the staff just has some information about the President meeting with the midshipmen?

MR. SPEAKES: Oh -- information on it?

Q No reason to tie up the briefing with this --

MR. SPEAKES: Kim was in there when the meeting took place, so she may be helpful to you. And we got background.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

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